




Speech By  
**Michael Crandon**

**MEMBER FOR COOMERA**

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**PENALTIES AND SENTENCES (QUEENSLAND SENTENCING ADVISORY COUNCIL) AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr CRANDON** (Coomera—LNP) (7.58 pm): Thank you for the opportunity to stand tonight to speak to the bill that clearly is a very passionate subject for the member for Broadwater. All I can say is that if the rest of the House takes note of what she said and passes that on to their communities they will understand how ridiculous this particular issue is. The member for Broadwater encapsulated the issues in her two-part contribution. If members go looking for it, they should ensure they go to the left and the right of the matinee. There were 10 minutes before and 10 minutes after, or thereabouts.

While the LNP supports evidence based policymaking, the creation of another bureaucracy that adds no value and offers no additional research or support outside existing agencies is simply not warranted. The roles undertaken by the Sentencing Advisory Council can easily be undertaken by the Department of Justice and Attorney-General, Queensland Law Reform Commission and, in terms of the guideline judgements, the legal profession and academics as and when required, as opposed to a standing full-time body. It has no statutory authority and is merely an advisory body.

We think the money could be better spent providing access to justice for vulnerable Queenslanders through Legal Aid or, as was quite rightly pointed out on more than one occasion by the member for Broadwater, community legal centres. The Robina Community Legal Centre was one case in point. I was there just recently to witness what they do. It really is a valuable service to the community on the Gold Coast. The concept of having only one funded legal centre on the Gold Coast right now indicates that this government does not realise that if one party to a matter goes to that legal service then the other party has nothing. The other party has nowhere to go except the Robina legal centre, which is making it happen on a mere \$10,000 a year. It is looking after people every Thursday night. Anywhere between 25 and 40 people are being supported by the Robina legal centre on a Thursday night. The onus should be on this government to ensure that there is some funding for that legal centre in the immediate term.

This is another example of government reviewing and not doing, of a government whose plan is to go soft on organised crime, which includes stitching up the terms of reference for a predetermined report—and how many times have we seen that before—watering down penalties, scrapping the VLAD laws and reducing police resources that are our first line of protection against organised crime. Later tonight, in my adjournment speech, I will be talking about the issue of police. I can assure honourable members there is a lot to be said for the essential need for additional police in the northern Gold Coast because of the massive growth in the population there—growth that no-one in this House has seen. It is so big that there are over 42,000 electors in my electorate, something in the order of 35,000 or 36,000 in the Gaven electorate, and the Albert electorate has something like 38,000. We are talking about something in the order of 120,000 electors—not population, electors. Now let us add the rest of the population: the young people, the people who cannot vote for us, the many people who are coming from New Zealand, the Pacific islands and other parts of the world such as South Africa and England

because they know the northern Gold Coast is an absolutely wonderful place to live and to move to. These are the people who are being left behind by wasteful expenditure—\$1.8 million on this wasteful expense.

That \$1.8 million would go a long way to providing some of the 50 additional police—this is \$1.8 million a year—that we need on the northern Gold Coast just to catch up to the growth in the population on the northern Gold Coast. We are talking about something in the order of 200,000 people. The other night someone on the other side of the House was saying that they had a population of 4,000 people in a particular community in their electorate and the number of police had been increased to four. That is one police officer for every 1,000 people. The northern Gold Coast has close to 200,000 people and yet we have 65 police officers—almost 200,000 people to 65 police officers. That is one police officer for every 3,000 people. I will be talking more about this in my adjournment speech tonight.

We had an incident recently where police were not in a position to attend one of my schools that was in a lockdown situation until four o'clock in the afternoon. Why were the police not in a position to go to that school? It is because the officers who were on deck, the officers who were working their tails off, working so hard—

**Mr RYAN:** I rise to a point of order. Mr Deputy Speaker, the member has already foreshadowed that he is going to be talking about this matter in the adjournment debate. I ask that you draw him to the standing orders in respect of relevance and ask him to speak to the bill.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Crawford): Order! Member for Coomera, if you can stick to the bill, I am sure you will have your three minutes later on.

**Mr CRANDON:** I certainly will have my three minutes. I was about to sit down but, given that a point of order has been made, I am more than happy to stand here and talk for the next four minutes. I thank the member opposite because it gives me the opportunity to talk about the \$1.8 million waste that is this organisation.

Let me go back to some of the things that I have often said in this House about the need for our committees to look at the evidence as it is provided to them by all of those people who come and spend their time before our committees, the witnesses. Let us look at all of the evidence, not just cherry-pick it and pick this little piece here because this guy over here thought it was a good idea and this guy over here thought it was a good idea. Let us make sure that we look at all of the evidence and then weigh up that evidence—and I see the member for Stretton is very interested; I am glad that he is taking this as an opportunity to learn—and come to the appropriate conclusion. The appropriate conclusion in terms of this particular bill is that this \$1.8 million could be much better spent on so many other things. As I said earlier, the Robina legal centre is a perfect example of that. A \$300,000 contribution to the Robina legal centre in a year would allow them to go full time and allow them to provide to the people on the Gold Coast a full service, in conjunction with the other legal centre that is on the Gold Coast, so that they can easily and properly provide advice and support to people who are suffering domestic violence, for example.

If honourable members have been reading the media they would know that there has been an explosion in the reporting of domestic violence issues, and I applaud that because the reality is that domestic violence issues were hidden away for far too long. If there is one thing that this House has done, both sides of the House in conjunction with one another—and I give no weight to one side or the other; I give equal weight to both sides—they have ensured that the issue of domestic violence has come to the fore. What that has done, and what we have to back up now, is encourage women in particular—obviously the majority of people suffering domestic violence are women and children—to come out of the woodwork and to leave the place in which they were living, the place where they were in danger, and to go and seek support. The problem is that that support is not fully funded, and the Robina legal centre is a perfect example. The other legal centre on the Gold Coast, the Gold Coast Community Legal Centre, does a wonderful job. The Robina legal centre also needs that funding so that it can provide that additional material support.

I ask the Attorney-General to go down to the Robina legal centre and have a look at what they are doing and appreciate how much more they could do. All they need is \$300,000 of that \$1.8 million that is going to be wasted on this.